

TO THE

PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

LETTER XVII.

*Parliamentary Reform.—Letter to the Electors of Westminster.—Great Meeting in London.*

Botley, 15th June, 1816.

This subject of REFORM is of the greatest consequence to every one, who looks with anxiety towards what is to happen in England. Reform is a matter of as much importance to us as *Independence* was to you. So little have you heard of this, through the hired channels which have supplied you with intelligence from England, that it is not very surprising that you do not appear to attach much importance to a question which *must*, if not decided in favour of the people, produce a struggle of a nature too bloody for any man to think of without horror.

I have before exposed the infamy of the Boroughmongers. In the present number I wish to give you, if possible, an adequate idea of the warfare that we are carrying on against them. The number will consist of a letter from myself to the *Electors of Westminster*. This letter will speak for itself; only I should observe to you, that the subject of it was of a degree of importance to our cause, of which it is impossible to give you an adequate notion.

After this letter follows a *Declaration*, agreed to the other day, at a very large meeting held in London, and consisting of gentlemen from all parts of England, and some from Scotland and Ireland. This *Declaration* is from the admirable pen of MAJOR CARTWRIGHT; and, when you have read that declaration, and the *speech* by which it was introduced, I beg you to recollect, that the author is *seventy-five years of age*. Pray read every word with attention; and, I hope that there is not a heart in America which will not warm towards this brave and persevering defender of the rights of mankind. Upon reading my letter to the electors of Westminster, you will think, that I may have exaggerated in speaking of his talents. But, read his speech and his declaration.

To these I have added a very imperfect

(the best I could get) report of the Speech of Sir FRANCIS BURDETT upon this occasion. You will see how *he* treats the tyrants. But I can assure you, that very few men would have *dared* to utter such words; and, that even *he* would have been seized hold on for it some years ago. The Oligarchy, with all its army, will not venture to lay hands on *him* again. An attempt to send him to the Tower again would certainly *fail*; and *then*, the despots must look sharply about them.

These base usurpers of our rights pretend to believe, that Sir Francis Burdett aims at producing "*Anarchy and Confusion*." They know well to the contrary. He has one of the largest estates in the kingdom. His estate is clear of all incumbrances. His income is far beyond his outgoings. He *must* lose by a *convulsion*. Besides, his mild temper, his domestic habits, his love of rural pleasures and of books, his learning, his wisdom, his kind and generous disposition: all forbid the belief, that he can wish for any thing more than he professes to wish for. He is sincerity itself; the frankest, most familiar, least conceited man that I ever saw. Slow to pronounce even against an enemy. In short, I believe that there is hardly a good quality in man which he has not. And, this is the man whom our Oligarchs, or rather their hirelings, call a *demagogue*!

The Oligarchy stand in great dread of him. *They* themselves say no evil of this champion of reform, whom they would at any time gladly *conciliate*; that is to say, *corrupt*. This they will never accomplish. The confidence of the people in him is, as it ought to be, without limit. There is no man in England doubts the integrity of Sir Francis Burdett, any more than he doubts of his own existence.

The opinions, and the very words of such a man, at such a time, are of great importance. His opinions upon the subject of reform, you will gather from his speech; which speech, together with that of the venerable Cartwright, will, I hope, convince you, that little old England has still some men left worthy of inhabiting the native soil of Hampden and of Sidney. And I will hope, besides, that, our great

cause being well understood amongst you, we shall have your *sympathy*. The same despotism that has just aimed a blow at your liberties, have ours under their feet. Sir Francis Burdett, in his speech at the Westminster Anniversary, told the meeting, that the blood of England had been shed for the purpose of enslaving all the world; that this detestable Oligarchy had not left a single country upon earth unenslaved: "Yes," said he, "I am wrong: there is *one country*; yet, even that country the cruel and unnatural monster endeavoured to render miserable; but *I thank God it failed*; I thank God it was beaten and driven off in disgrace!"

There was thundering applause upon the uttering of this sentence. We sympathize with you; and we hope, that you will be so just, as to give us at least your good wishes, seeing that our enemy is also your bitter foe. We hope, that you will have the justice to distinguish between an oppressed people and their crafty oppressors. We are convinced, that both nations may be *great* without being enemies; and we delight in the thought, that many of us who are now struggling against this despotism, may see the day, when, disembarassed of this tyranny, the two nations, instead of being an affliction, may be a blessing to each other.

WM. COBBETT.

TO THE

ELECTORS OF WESTMINSTER,

*On the subject of choosing, in case of a vacancy, a Member to be the Colleague of Sir Francis Burdett.*

Botley, 15th June, 1816.

GENTLEMEN,

We are now all well convinced, that the real cause of the evils, with which our country is afflicted, is the want of a reform in the Commons' House of Parliament; and, therefore, it becomes our duty to take into our serious consideration what we ourselves ought to *do* in order to assist in the producing of such reform. It becomes us, too, to enter upon this consideration *in time*. What man is there, who, in his private concerns, puts off, to the last moment, the preparation for the adopting of any step which he deems essential to his prosperity or happiness? And, therefore, if we deem parliamentary reform essential to the prosperity and happiness of England, do we act the part of

good and true Englishmen, if we neglect to consider and to discuss, while there is time for consideration and discussion, what measures we ought to adopt, and that are within our power, for the restoration of those blessings to our country?

There are various ways in which you are able to serve this great national cause; but, in no way so effectually, as by a just and judicious exercise of your right of choosing your representatives in Parliament, which right you, and you alone, really and practically possess; and, it being, in my opinion, of the utmost consequence to the success of the cause of reform, that your next choice of a person to have the honour of representing you, and of being the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett, should be fixed on a man the most fit in the whole kingdom, I have thought it my duty to address you upon the subject.

As an introduction to the remarks which it is my intention to submit to you, and, indeed, as the grounds on which those remarks have appeared to me to be the more pressingly called for, I will first state, in as brief and clear a manner as I am able, certain circumstances which came to light at the recent celebration of the anniversary of the glorious triumph of principle over corruption in the City of Westminster.

That triumph, Gentlemen, was so complete; it was, as Mr. Windham, in a speech in the House of Commons, confessed it to be, so "unmixedly meritorious;" it was, in itself, so honourable, and, in its effects, so beneficial to our country, that I always feel respect and gratitude towards those who, in any degree, distinguished themselves on that memorable occasion. And, if I now am compelled to call in question the conduct of any of the individuals to whom I allude, I beg you clearly to understand, that I impute that conduct by no means to evil intention, but to error. Of the political errors of *others*, I am well aware that it becomes nobody to speak with more lenity than myself; for, though justice has been seldom done to me in this respect, I shall, I hope, never think of denying justice in return.

Being invited as a guest to the Dinner on the 23d of May, I went, as requested by letter, to the private room of the Stewards, where I saw the *List of Toasts*, which had been prepared by the managing committee. I need not tell you, Gentle-



men, that Toasts, upon such occasions, contain opinions, well weighed beforehand, and intended to go forth as the solemnly promulgated sentiments of the meeting. It is, therefore, of the greatest consequence, not only that the sentiments be sound; but, that, if particular persons be placed at the head of them, the names of those persons should stand on the list in the order in which the persons themselves stand, as public men, in the estimation of the Meeting.

On the list, of which I am now speaking, stood, first, "*the People*;" next, "*the King*," and then "*the Princess Charlotte*," with an appropriate sentiment subjoined to each. Next came "*Sir Francis Burdett*," and after him "*Lord Cochrane*," the two representatives of the City of Westminster. Thus far all was unexceptionable; but, what was my surprise upon seeing the next in order, "*HENRY BROUGHAM, Esq. the enlightened advocate of the people's rights!*" This surprise, however, was soon changed into indignation, when, after a long list of Toasts, and some, too, at best, of very trifling import, I found, almost at the very bottom of the List, and even after the name of *Mr. Curwen*, who was one of the first to "rally round" Perceval in order to send Sir Francis Burdett to the Tower under the escort of a regiment of guards; when, even after *this* name, I found that of *Major Cartwright*! The venerable and venerated Major Cartwright; the *real* advocate of the people's rights; he who has literally spent a life in advocating those rights; he to whom we owe more, perhaps, than to any other human being, the still existence of sound constitutional principles, the man who is beloved by every friend of freedom who ever heard the sound of his name, and of whom even its bitterest foes *dare* not, for their own character's sake, speak with disrespect; the man, whom Sir Francis Burdett, during his admirable speech, in an hour afterwards, distinguished by way of excellence as "*the honest, true-hearted Englishman!*"

Gentlemen, I am afraid, that my conduct and language, upon making this discovery, were not precisely such as sober reason would have dictated even under circumstances so irritating. I will, therefore, not detain you by a detail of that, to which I look back with no pleasing sensations, but will proceed to the result,

which was, that, in consequence of a declaration, that, if my tongue did not fail its office, I never would, in silence, sit in the room and hear the name of any man living toasted, after the two Members, *before* Major Cartwright, Mr. Brougham's name was taken out, and that of "*the honest, true-hearted Englishman*," introduced in its stead; and in that amended order the name of the latter was given at the dinner.

Yet (and at this you will be astonished) the List of the Toasts, as originally drawn up, was *afterwards* sent for publication, and was *actually published* in the ADVERTISER, which it is well known, I believe, has the greatest circulation of any daily paper in London; and this, too, notwithstanding the toast of Mr. BROUGHAM was *never given at all*, he having, long after the company had dined, sent an apology for not attending.

Thus, by the means of *somebody*, I do not pretend to say of whom, a very gross misrepresentation of the proceedings of the meeting was sent forth to the public, and this misrepresentation, too, upon points of the greatest consequence. Through the means of this publication, a meeting of, I believe, about four hundred gentlemen, assembled together from all parts of England, and some from Scotland and Ireland, having Sir Francis Burdett as Chairman, stand exhibited to the nation at large, as having placed Mr. Brougham the first in public merit after the Members for Westminster, and as having preferred even Mr. Curwen before Major Cartwright!

Why, Gentlemen, were there no other motive than that of rescuing a meeting, at which I was present, from such foul disgrace, that motive alone would be sufficient to call forth this address. But, there are other motives, and those much more powerful, by which I am actuated upon the present occasion, and which will induce me to cast aside all reserve of every description.

I had, for some time, known, that it was the intention of certain persons, who have been active in Westminster, to endeavour to promote the views of Mr. Brougham, which evidently were to obtain a seat for that City; and, the Toast before mentioned, especially when I looked at the order in which it stood, appeared to me to be a complete confirmation of what I had heard upon the subject. You will please also to bear in mind the curious circumstances attending Mr. Brougham's

appearance at, and disappearance from, the last meeting in Palace Yard. All the persons, who were present at that numerous meeting, know, that Mr. Brougham was formally announced and introduced to the meeting by Mr. Wishart; and, that the meeting were informed by the last-mentioned gentleman, that they would be *presently addressed by Mr. Brougham*. He did not name Mr. Brougham here; but, the description and allusion were too plain to be misunderstood. In short, it was clear, that this occasion had been fixed on for the purpose of *introducing Mr. Brougham to you* as a preliminary to further proceedings; which scheme was defeated in the manner which I will presently describe.

Before the Meeting in Palace Yard took place, a meeting had been held by a *Committee* to settle upon what should be moved and urged at the Palace Yard Meeting. At this meeting of the Committee *Mr. Brougham himself attended*; and, which I beg you to bear in mind, there was agreed upon, while he was present, a *Resolution*, to be moved at Palace Yard, containing an expression of *the thanks of the people of Westminster to the Opposition Members for their having supported the rights of the people*. Upon this resolution's passing, (of which the framers had no doubt,) Mr. Brougham was, of course, to come forward and address the people in return.

Therefore, when the Resolution was moved, he stood ready for the performance of his part of the ceremony. But, to the utter discomfiture of the whole project, Mr. Hunt came forward, and *opposed* the motion of thanks, which motion, when put to the vote, you *negatived* without one single dissenting voice. Mr. Brougham, however, did not wait for the *decision*. Mr. Hunt had not half finished the statement of his objections to the vote of thanks, when Mr. Brougham thought proper to *withdraw*; or, more properly speaking, to *decamp*.

Now, Gentlemen, it is necessary that we call to mind, that since the meeting in Palace Yard, it has been stated in the newspapers, that Lord Castlereagh has, in the House of Commons, taunted Mr. Brougham with this mark of the people's disapprobation, and especially with the *precipitate retreat* from your presence; and the newspapers have also informed us, that Mr. Brougham asserted, in answer, 1st,

that the *only* objection made to him, was, that he was a *lawyer*; and, 2d, that he did not appear at the Palace Yard Meeting with *any intention to speak*, he *not being an elector of Westminster*!

Gentlemen, I should be sorry to impute wilful falsehood to any person of respectability, and more particularly to a person of Mr. Brougham's great talents. But, how are we to account, then, for Mr. Wishart's *announcing Mr. Brougham to the meeting*? How are we to account for his telling the meeting to expect to *hear* that gentleman speak? How are we to account for Mr. Brougham's going *upon the hustings*, erected for the use of the speakers? How are we to account for Mr. Brougham's attending the previous Committee of arrangement, at which Mr. Wishart also attended, and to attend at which required him to be an elector as much, or more, than to speak required it? In short, it would be to trifle with you; it would be to insult your understandings, to pretend to believe, that the whole thing was not prepared for the introduction of Mr. Brougham's speech, as much as any piece was ever prepared for exhibition at a theatre. And yet, if the report of the debate in the House of Commons be correct, Mr. Brougham did assert, that he went to that Meeting *without any intention to speak*!

The scheme having, however, been frustrated here, the misled friends of Mr. Brougham seem to have resolved on making another effort at the dinner of the 23d. I was, therefore, particularly attentive to what I saw going on for this purpose; and, the scheme was, as you have seen, once more blown to air. But, seeing that it might again be revived; seeing the parties so pertinacious, I thought it my duty not to let slip the occasion of respectfully offering my opinion to the company upon the subject of their choice (in case of a vacancy) of a gentleman to be the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett. And, in order to avoid the possibility of being misunderstood, and, if possible, of being misrepresented, I put my opinion upon paper, in the form of distinct propositions, which paper I read to the meeting, or company, in the following words:

"That it is now manifest to all men, that the evils, under which our country labours, arise solely from the want of a Constitutional Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament.

"That, assembled, as we are, to cele-



“brate the triumph of purity of election in  
“this city, it becomes us to think seriously,  
“and *betimes*, on what we ourselves  
“ought *to do*, in order further to aid the  
“cause of Reform, whenever an oppor-  
“tunity for that purpose shall offer.

“That the city of Westminster, since  
“its emancipation from the thralldom in  
“which it was held by the intrigues of a  
“crafty Oligarchy, and particularly after  
“the admirable manner in which they  
“chose the Honourable Baronet who  
“now fills the chair, has been deservedly  
“looked up to by the rest of the nation,  
“as the source of sentiments to be held,  
“and of actions to be imitated.

“That, therefore, it is of the utmost im-  
“portance, that in no part of the conduct  
“of the electors of Westminster there  
“should be any thing, in the smallest de-  
“gree, equivocal; and that, more espe-  
“cially in their choice of a person to be  
“the future colleague of the Honourable  
“Baronet, their conduct should be such  
“as to leave not the smallest doubt in the  
“mind of any human being, that the Citi-  
“zens of Westminster will never rest sa-  
“tisfied with any thing short of a full and  
“fair representation and annual Parlia-  
“ments.

“That we ought to feel, as to this  
“great national cause, the same degree of  
“earnestness and anxiety, that we feel  
“for the success of any weighty private  
“concern; that when we wish to pre-  
“serve our property or our lives, we re-  
“sort to the aid of the lawyer and the  
“physician whom we deem most likely  
“to effect the purpose in view, wholly  
“casting aside all considerations of deli-  
“cacy, all the ties of private intercourse  
“and of friendships; and that, unless the  
“electors of Westminster, in the case con-  
“templated, entertain and act upon the  
“same sort of earnestness and anxiety,  
“the cause of Reform must materially  
“suffer.

“That, if a man can be found, whose  
“attachment to the cause of Reform can  
“no more admit of doubt than can the ex-  
“istence of the sun; whose zeal and per-  
“severance in that cause surpass all that  
“was ever heard of, of those qualities, in  
“any other man; whose experience,  
“knowledge, and talents, as applied to  
“this subject, stand wholly unrivalled;  
“and, if to these it be added, that he is  
“an English gentleman, born and bred,  
“of fortune independent, and of charac-

“ter perfectly spotless; if such a man  
“can be found, who will say, that such  
“a man ought not to be chosen? And,  
“who will say, that such a man is not  
“found in Major Cartwright?

“That as to the effect of this choice  
“(leaving aside the indulgence of those  
“feelings of gratitude which we all enter-  
“tain) it would set a great and striking  
“example to the country; it would give  
“the Oligarchy a blow that would make  
“it hang its head abashed; it would en-  
“able the venerable champion of Reform  
“to meet its enemies face to face; it  
“would waft on the wings of even the  
“hired part of the press those facts and  
“principles, which, in spite of all his ex-  
“ertions, are now confined by a partial  
“and narrow calculation; and, if even a  
“few years (for he has courage to hear  
“the calculation) should deprive us of  
“him for ever, they will, at any rate,  
“have been so many years of glory to  
“the cause, and so many years of shame  
“and confusion to its foes.”

This paper, which was read by me just  
after Major Cartwright had spoken, had  
been written about two hours before the  
dinner, but had been shown to nobody,  
and I never had mentioned the subject to  
Major Cartwright in my life. It was  
not intended to propose the paper as  
*Resolutions* to be adopted by the Meet-  
ing. I merely read it, after a short intro-  
duction, as the expression of my own deli-  
berate opinion; and, I was happy to per-  
ceive, that it contained an expression of  
the opinion of the Meeting, signified by  
its unqualified approbation. During the  
remaining part of the evening, after the  
Chairman and Major Cartwright had re-  
tired, a Gentleman asked me to give him  
a copy of the paper, in order to his hav-  
ing it published. Having no copy, I gave  
him the original, which has not been re-  
turned to me. But I can safely trust my  
memory for every sentiment; and, I be-  
lieve, for every word.

Now, Gentlemen, though I cannot more  
clearly express my opinion than I have  
done it in this paper, as to *who ought to be*  
*chosen*, the occasion calls for some re-  
marks as to *who ought not to be chosen*;  
and, I have no scruple to say, that Mr.  
Brougham ought not to be chosen on any  
account. I object to him, in the first  
place, because he is a lawyer, practising  
at the bar. In the long list of lawyers,  
who have, during this king's long, *very*

long reign, been members of parliament, there has not been *one*, who, first or last, has not become a hearty feeder upon the taxes, in one character or another. After *fifty-four years of experience* in this way, you *must* believe, that nothing short of a real, bona fide *miracle* could possibly produce an exception in favour of Mr. Brougham; that is to say, (as Wilberforce said the other night,) nothing short "of the immediate interposition of Divine Providence," for this especial purpose.

But, Gentlemen, this, though, in my opinion, quite sufficient, is not the only, nor is it the greatest, objection to Mr. Brougham as a member for Westminster. This objection is immovable, unless Mr. Brougham will throw off the gown and wig; for, it is impossible to believe, that the *same cause*, be it what it may; be it ambition, be it love of money, be it love of fame, be it love of power, be it rivalry; it is impossible to believe, that the same cause, which can induce a man to retain the wig and gown, when he well knows that they are a ground of suspicion as to his political fidelity, will not continue to operate, and that it will not, first or last, place him upon the list of tax-eaters, who must of *necessity* be enemies of a Reform of Parliament. It is impossible for me to say how much of *the taxes* go directly into the hands of lawyers; but, when you consider the long list of lawyers who are employed by the government, I do not think you can estimate the sum at less than *two millions of pounds a year*; a mass of temptation too great for frail mortals to resist, while they have gowns upon their backs and wigs upon their heads.

Besides, what *proof*: no, I will not ask what proof Mr. Brougham has ever given of his attachment to the cause of Reform; I will ask what *symptom* he has ever given of such attachment? He has had many opportunities of distinctly declaring his sentiments upon this subject; but, upon no occasion, in the House or out of it, has he ever declared himself resolved to pursue a Reform of the House of Commons. Never has he given any *pledge*; never has he made any *promise*; never has he, upon this subject, uttered a clear and *unequivocal opinion*. But, on the contrary, he has *spoken* and *written* AGAINST a Reform, such as Sir Francis Burdett and you wish to see adopted. These speeches and writings would, of

themselves, weigh nothing at all with me, if he had *now* come manfully forward, and, acknowledging his past errors, declared his opinion to have been changed, and his conviction, from experience, that a Reform ought to take place. I bring no charge against him on account of what he said or what he wrote, upon this subject, four years ago. He is now four years older than he was then. Men live to grow wiser. Stocks and Stones, in the shape of men, never, indeed, fall into error; but, then, of what *use* are Stocks and Stones to the cause of Reform, or any other cause, which demands mind and talent? But, from Mr. Brougham you have had no declaration of an altered way of thinking; and, if he were now to be chosen by you, he would be perfectly at liberty to *oppose* Sir Francis Burdett and all the Petitioners for Reform, even including yourselves.

But, though Mr. Brougham has made no declaration of his change of opinion upon the subject of Reform, he appears to me to have made, by his conduct as to other matters, a pretty clear discovery of the use to which he would apply the weight which he would acquire from being chosen by you. I could mention a dozen; but I will content myself with one instance, which has occurred, during the present session of parliament; and that is, that he gave his decided approbation to the Bills, brought in by Castlereagh, to *make legal the transporting and imprisoning* of Napoleon, whom Mr. Brougham himself acknowledged to be a *prisoner of war*. He asserted, upon this occasion, that *all the nation approved of this part of the conduct of the Ministers*. Was this true, Gentlemen? Did *you* approve of that conduct? No; for you petitioned, in the most earnest language, against interfering to force the Bourbons upon the French people: and what were the transporting and imprisonment of Napoleon but a part, and a very essential part too, of the measure of forcing the French people to submit to that Family which they had twice cast out? You are well convinced, that Napoleon was really the object of the French people's choice; you are convinced that he still *is* the object of their choice; you see a large foreign army kept up in France, partly at our own expense, to prevent the Bourbons from being chased out a third time; you see the scaffolds in France streaming with the blood



of a people who cry out for Napoleon's return; you see, that all the cruelties of despotism and persecution have, over one half of Europe, followed closely upon the heels of that fall of Napoleon which was effected by immense German armies, subsidized by us; and, while you have all these objects before your eyes, while your hearts are filled with anguish for the sufferers, and with indignation against those who have been the cause of the suffering, you hear Mr. Brougham assert, that the *whole nation* approve of the act which was intended to consummate, and put the seal upon, that series of deeds by which those sufferings have been produced! And yet, there are persons weak enough to hope, that you can be prevailed upon to choose this very Mr. Brougham as the *colleague of Sir Francis Burdett*.

Gentlemen, Mr. Brougham is reported to have said upon the occasion here referred to, that the transportation and imprisonment of Napoleon were justified by the *law of nations*. Mr. Brougham is a lawyer; and I challenge Mr. Brougham here, seeing that he did not give me an opportunity of challenging him at the anniversary Dinner, to produce from *any* writer on the law of nations, a single precedent, a single fact, a single rule, maxim, principle, or opinion, which, if fairly stated or interpreted, will justify, or apologize for, this ever-memorable deed. He acknowledged Napoleon to have been a *prisoner of war*. Well, Gentlemen, and did he not cease to be a prisoner of war *as soon as the war was at an end*? It is said that *his government* did not demand his release. But, did that circumstance authorize us to detain, and even to transport him? Did it authorize us, too, to seize on his private property, and even to deny him any correspondence and any thing to *read*, except what our Ministers should approve of? If, at the close of a war, prisoners made during that war be not demanded by their government, they become free at once, and may go whither they please. Our *Alien Law* would have enabled the Ministers to refuse him a residence here; but, by the law of Nations and the law of England, he was at liberty to go to any other country that he chose. If we may transport and imprison for life prisoners of war not demanded by their government, why may we not hang and quarter them? If this circumstance gives us a right to deprive them of their liberty and proper-

ty, why not to deprive them of life? Suppose, that, at the close of the next war with France, Sir Francis Burdett, by some accident, should happen to be a prisoner of war in that country, and that the Ministers should not think proper to demand his release; are you ready to allow, that the Bourbons would have a right to transport and keep him a guarded prisoner on a rock for life; and, moreover, to seize the property they might find in his possession, and to cut him off from all correspondence and all means of knowing what was passing in the world? Are you ready to allow this? No: you feel your blood boil at the idea. Yet, according to the principle of Mr. Brougham, the Bourbons would have a right to act thus towards the Honourable Baronet.

So far from its being true, that the *whole nation* approved of this measure, the fact is, that a very great majority of the sound and enlightened part of the nation decidedly disapproved of it; and, as you well know, that, greatly to their honour, the *Duke of Sussex* and *Lord Holland* entered and recorded their solemn protest against it. But, if Mr. Brougham could, by his conduct upon this occasion, secure the approbation of the weak, the timid, whose alarms had deprived them of the power to be just: if he could, as to this great point, side with the Oligarchy; and, if he could, at the same time, by his blandishments and intrigues, prevail so far over the minds of a well-meaning Committee as to induce them to work in the paving of his way to a seat for Westminster; if he could do all these, at one and the same time, his prospect of the Attorney-Generalship, and, perhaps, of the post of Prime Minister, was as fair as heart could wish. But, Gentlemen, passing over his direct opposition to the motion of Sir Francis for receiving a petition against the Scotch Judge, his expression, during his speech on the Liberty of the Press, that *there wanted only one or two little improvements* to make our present practical constitution perfect; and his occasional compliments to Castlereagh; passing over these and many other objectionable things, with which I will not weary you, is it to be tolerated, that any body should propose to you to choose this gentleman as the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett?

In this gentleman it is impossible to discover any thing but great ability, without any fixed principle as to the object that

you have in view; without any pledge, any declaration, any even the smallest security, or ground of hope, that that ability will not be employed *against*, instead of *for*, the efforts of Sir Francis Burdett and yourselves in the cause of Reform; and with recent instances before you of active and strenuous support of deeds hostile to every principle of general freedom and of common justice; adding thereto that long experience bids even the most credulous to take warning against him barely on account of the profession to which he belongs, and which, out of hundreds of thousands, has never yet, in our country, produced one single politician firm in attachment to the liberties of the people. In Major Cartwright, on the contrary, what do we behold? Not only a man whose efforts in the cause *have been* the efforts of a life; towards whom for us not to feel the highest possible degree of gratitude would pronounce us to be almost unworthy of the name of men; not only a man to whom we are *already* so much indebted, for I will here leave the *past* wholly out of the question; but a man on whose political integrity and courage we can always safely rely; whose principles are as well known to us, and are as dear to our hearts as is the name of England itself; who has no other care upon his mind than that which arises out of his anxiety for his country's freedom; who has no other object in view than that of accomplishing the restoration of that freedom; who is secure against temptation of every kind that corruption can imagine; whose purity of character, whose generosity of sentiment, whose inflexible adherence to justice, whose unconquerable perseverance, whose knowledge, and whose talents mark him out as the man worthy of being the associate of "Westminster's Pride and England's Hope."

To such a man what can be objected? What can be discovered as a reason for his not being, as the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett, preferred before *any* other man? I have never heard but one reason even *hinted* at, and that is *his age*. Age is never urged as an objection to kings, seldom to Generals, Admirals, Chancellors, or Ministers. Age is not, as to the capacities of man, to be reckoned merely by *number of years*. Some men are much older, in this respect, at fifty, and even at forty, than Major Cartwright is at seventy-five. In this, the only true way of estimating, as to our present purpose, Mr. BARON MYSERES, who is *eighty-five*, is much younger than many men are at *fifty*. He performs all his duties as Cursitor Baron of the Exchequer, which duties are various and important, with as much regularity, and in every respect as well, as he performed those of Attorney-General in Canada fifty years ago. Few men in England write or speak with more fluency, more precision, or more force; to which I take this opportunity of adding, that very few indeed have acted, as to politics, so disinterested, or, in any respect, so honourable a part. Degenerate and base as the times are, there are still some worthy men left in England; and, if their names should ever be collected, that of *Myseres* will certainly occupy a prominent place.

If it could, with truth, be said, that the mind of the great champion of reform had begun to discover any symptoms of feebleness, or that his body had relaxed in its part of its necessary exertions; if either his pen or his tongue had begun to falter; even *then* I would say, let us hasten to avail ourselves of what remains of his valuable life. But, such is not the case. If we look at the latest productions of his pen; if we listen to the last speech from his lips; if we keep in view his daily and almost hourly exertions: every thing tells us, that he unites what we so seldom see united, the wis-

dom of age with the vigour of youth. Besides, if age has its disadvantages, it has also its advantages. To treat age with disrespect is always a proof of an unfeeling and profligate mind: and, when to the circumstance of age is added that of unblemished character, they, of themselves, have a weight of no inconsiderable importance.

After all, however, the main consideration is, the *effect* which would be produced in favour of the cause of Reform by the election of Major Cartwright. It would show to the whole kingdom; to the enemies of Reform as well as to its friends, that Westminster was resolved never to yield this great point. The enemies of Reform in the house would have to contend with two instead of one; and, that additional one having nothing else to do in the world but to combat against them. I defy the press, in spite of its hireling character, to suppress, or to prevent the effect of the speeches, to which the house must and would listen. The nature of the subject would thus become better understood; men would more frequently have it in their mouths; a new and great interest would be excited. The bare circumstance of carrying the veteran patriot down to the house upon the heads of two hundred thousand men would be a demonstration of public discernment, public spirit, and public resolution, that would make corruption hang her head; and most sincerely do I believe, that, after such a demonstration, the cause of the people would speedily be crowned with success; and that our liberties, our peace, prosperity, and happiness, would be established upon a sure and lasting foundation, and that, too, without any assault, or any encroachment, on the rights of the Church, the Nobles, or the King.

Having thus expressed my conviction, that such would be the effect of the step which I have taken the liberty to propose to you, and knowing your earnestness and sincerity in seeking such a result, I shall hardly suppose it possible, that any one will not have anticipated, and concurred in the opinion, that Major Cartwright ought to be elected to the *exclusion of Lord Cochrane*, even if the noble Lord, from his father being still alive, should remain eligible. My opinion goes to the preferring of Major Cartwright before every other man living as the colleague of Sir Francis Burdett. But, having thought it necessary to be thus explicit with regard to the noble Lord, justice to him and to myself also requires that I should go a little further, unwilling as I am longer to trespass on your attention.

Let me first observe, that my feeling towards Lord Cochrane is that of unfeigned respect. My confidence in his honour and integrity are undiminished. Without affecting to have any particular intimacy with his Lordship, I may say, that as to the circumstances which have harassed him for the two last years, I have had better opportunities of judging than the public in general. I can also say, that from the first to the last, as far as related to the affair of the *Hoax*, I applied myself with all possible diligence and care to discover the real truth, especially after the appearance of the affidavit of his Lordship. And now, at the end of two years, having read all that has been published, and heard all that has been publicly said, upon the matter, I express my thorough conviction, that he was entirely innocent of every part of the offence laid to his charge. Further I dare not go, or I would also express my conviction as to what I deem to have been the real cause of his sufferings.

You, entertaining the same conviction, showed not less soundness of judgment than generosity of feeling by sending him back to the house after his



expulsion. You acted upon principles which are amongst those that do most honour to the human heart; a love of fair play, and a scorn of the idea of deserting the oppressed. But, gentlemen, having satisfied what you deemed (and, I think, rightly deemed) the demands of justice; having amply discharged your duty towards Lord Cochrane, your country, your distressed, your harassed, your pauperized country, has now a demand at your hands, and that demand stands prior to the private feelings not only of one individual, but to those of any half of the nation.

Gentlemen, look at Ireland; look at her miserable millions! Look at England, swarming with paupers, and convulsed in every limb of her body. Look at the shocking scenes at this moment passing under our eyes. Look at the military array: contemplate the approaching punishment of the unfortunate creatures who, ignominious as their end may justly become, are still Englishmen, and still our countrymen. Do you believe that these evils and this disgrace will ever have an end; do you believe that there is any remedy for them other than that of a parliamentary reform? If you do not, the plain path of duty is, to do all that lies in your power to effect that important end; and then the only remaining question is, which is the person most likely to advance that end, Lord Cochrane or Major Cartwright.

In the particular case of the *expulsion* of Lord Cochrane, there was a motive which *cannot again exist*: for, it will hardly be pretended, that *every* man who has suffered from similar causes, ought, for that reason solely, to be chosen a member of parliament. If this were the case, there would be a great abundance of persons most amply qualified to receive your suffrages. Mr. LEIGH HUNT and his brother, for instance, have suffered most severely: and they have suffered, too, for what you and I, according to our wild notions, deem a *merit* instead of a *crime*. Yet, no one seems to think, that Mr. LEIGH HUNT ought to think his feelings wounded by your preferring Major Cartwright before him. There is, too, another feature which distinguishes the case of his Lordship from that of Mr. Leigh Hunt. Mr. Hunt's sufferings *originated* in nothing that you and I deem a *fault*; whereas Lord Cochrane, though we deem him innocent of all knowledge of the *Hoax*, certainly would have avoided the charge altogether, if he had abstained from that pursuit which is laudable in no man, and *in him* very indiscreet. If, indeed, an act of indiscretion had been committed in any attempt to defend, or assert the people's rights; and, if that act of indiscretion had been made the ground of proceedings, ending in great mortification and suffering to him, the obligation on you to persevere in rechoosing him would have been more weighty. But, if we look at the case as it stands, the suffering did not *originate* in any thing done, or attempted to be done, for Westminster in particular, or for the public in general. That my Lord Cochrane did nothing more than many others do, and than many *gentlemen* do, is certain. We know, that the laws against gambling in the funds is set at nought by thousands, and that the paper system has converted the country into one great gaming house. But still there is a *something* that sticks to the pursuit, which makes it unbecoming in such a person as Lord Cochrane, and which, even in many really good men, has excited a prejudice injurious to any political cause in which his Lordship is embarked.

It appears to me, therefore, that it is inconsistent, not only with public duty, but with common sense, to consider Lord Cochrane as an obstacle in the way of Major Cartwright; but, besides this,

I am morally certain, that an attempt to rechoose his Lordship would *fail of success*; and when it is considered, that, by making that attempt, you will expose yourselves to the hazard of seeing a creature of Corruption foisted into one of your seats, there cannot, it appears to me, be the smallest room for hesitation with any man who has sincerely at heart the triumph of the cause for which we have so long been contending. Nay, judging of Lord Cochrane by myself, and forming my opinion on what I have always observed of his character, I venture to assert, that he would be amongst the last men in the country to recommend any attempt which might, in its result, prove injurious to that cause.

With the venerable Major your path is smooth as glass. There are no rubs, no obstacles, no drawbacks, no prejudices, no exceptions. You all know him. All England knows him. His name is synonymous with every thing that is patriotic and virtuous. The wonder will be, not that Westminster has done herself the honour of choosing him at the age of seventy-five, but that she has not done herself that honour long ago. His life exhibits a rare instance, not only of long-continued exertion, but of still more rare patience and disinterestedness. The fittest amongst the fit to be chosen himself, he has always been labouring for the election of others. Animated solely by his desire to promote the happiness and true glory of his country, he has never sought for himself that distinction, which, I trust, gentlemen, is reserved to be conferred on him for the public good, by the enlightened and patriotic City of Westminster.

With a deep sense of the gratitude due to you from the whole kingdom for the benefit which it has derived from your excellent example,

I remain your friend and most obedient servant,  
WM. CORBETT.

*Great Meeting in London for Reform of Parliament.—Declaration of the Reformers, and speeches of Major Cartwright and Sir Francis Burdett.*

Major CARTWRIGHT.—Gentlemen, at an evening's conference last Saturday, it was agreed that we should not proceed in the usual mode of drawing up a string of resolutions, which are frequently disjointed, and not clearly connected, but that the better way would be to submit to your consideration a Declaration, in which all those principles that would have been contained in the Resolutions will be more conveniently embodied, and more argumentatively stated, so as to make an effective appeal to the judgment of the nation. I had at that time a lively hope that the task of submitting the Declaration to your consideration would have been put into abler hands than my own, both with regard to mental and bodily powers. It was only yesterday the task was laid on my shoulders, feeble as they are. On that account, as well as from the consideration that for a fortnight past I have been in an ill state of health, I must beg your indulgence while I am addressing you on a subject of the highest national importance. It is fit we should be guarded in what we say, in order to prevent the possibility of being misunderstood or misrepresented. As to misrepresentation with regard to myself, I hold it in utter contempt, but I should be sorry it should be a means of the cause of liberty being injured through me.

"Gentlemen, although, as you will have observed, this Meeting was convened by a body of Noblemen and Gentlemen associated for Parliamentary Reform, yet several other persons of rank and consideration were invited to a previous confer-

ence, for consulting on what should be submitted to your judgment, and for your concurrence, as most likely to call forth the voice of the people, for restoring to soundness that part of our Constitution which is gone to utter decay. Among those so invited to that conference none were omitted who had at any time moved in Parliament any thing relating to the general question; and the others, as you will imagine, were selected, because they were esteemed friendly to the cause. One only of the invited persons attended: one, however, who for superiority of intellect, and soundness of political principle, has not many equals. With respect to the non-attendance of the rest, the inference I draw is this—that the principles of the English representation are so simple, so obvious, so few, and in the Hampden Association are so well understood, there was not, in their opinion, any need on that account of a formal consultation. And with regard to arguments for animating the people in the cause of Reform, I suppose they thought that best left to each individual; and I expected them to attend this Meeting, for giving us in that way their support. True, Gentlemen, it is, that the principles of Representation are simple and obvious enough, lying in the narrow compass of three concise propositions:—1st. Suffrage to the extent at least of direct taxation; 2d. An equal distribution; and 3d. Parliaments of a duration not exceeding one year. And although each individual who may offer you his sentiments may be able to stir the hearts of the People, yet it is to be remembered that on such occasions, not only individuals deliver their personal opinions, but the collective body has also an opinion to give. By those who had a previous consultation, touching what, in the present most awful situation of our country, might be offered for your adoption, it was thought that a mere customary series of *Resolutions* would be less impressive than a *Declaration*; which, in the way of solemn appeal to the Public, was therefore preferred. Before I submit to you that *Declaration*, allow me to notice that it is now two years, within two days, when this room in which we are assembled was made to resound with the eloquence of several Members of the two Houses of Parliament, nobly exerted in the cause of humanity and freedom. On that occasion, those generous exertions were made in favour of the much-injured *Negroes* of Africa; ours, I trust, in favour of the much-injured natives of England, will not be less energetic. But seeing that Parliament had actually passed an Act for the abolition of the *African Slave Trade*, what, I would ask, brought the persons to whom I have alluded to, to this Hall, to remonstrate against any thing inconsistent with that statute? Could they not rely on Parliament acting conformably to its own law, and vindicating its own honour?—No: for the business they had in hand was to complain of an act of him who, in the phraseology of the times, is styled Manager of the Lower House; some call him Negro Driver of the Plantation. This man who, in 1809, had sold the very seats in that Lower House—the lowest of the low, and whom the slaves themselves, through dread of his displeasure, had screened from punishment. This man had signed a treaty for giving a renewed sanction to the selling of *African slaves*. Well, therefore, did those friends of abolition know there was no hope to be entertained from aught they could utter in that Lower House of Parliament, unless backed by a national voice. Therefore it was, that, in 1814, they came to this Hall, to the PEOPLE themselves, seeking that national support, without which they well knew they must fail. Coming hither, here they found the support they asked. Would I could now see the same

persons to aid us with their powerful eloquence, in our efforts for putting an end to the selling of the people of England! Well they played the part of *African Patriots*; to save *Africa* they came to the PEOPLE; while as *English Patriots*, alas! they come not to the People, but keep within the pale of the plantation, where the Negro Driver has only to hold up his whip, or to give out the watch-word, to put an extinguisher on any thing they propose. So charmed was I with certain passages in the language of four of the persons to whom I have alluded, that I was careful to preserve it. So strictly is it applicable to our present purpose, that I beg leave to adopt it as more forcible than any thing of my own. Earl Grey said, 'his object had been to show them the *magnitude* of the danger, that their efforts to avert it might be commensurate to it; and to beseech them that their feelings might not end in a *temporary* expression, but that they should impress them on the minds of their *children*, on their *friends*, on *public assemblies*, and strive in their families, their countries, and in Parliament, to apply a remedy.'

"Sir Samuel Romilly remarked, that 'It became the people of England to interfere, and with *one voice* to insist upon the *complete abolition*.' 'He believed that, generally, *individuals* were not aware of the influence and power they possessed when UNITED in the common cause, although the abolition itself, and many other important measures, had been carried by the *united energies* of the inhabitants of this country. Those numerous *petitions* with which the tables of the Legislature had been crowded, the Parliament *could not resist*, and the object so supported was *certain to be effected*, and every man who signed them had the delight of knowing that he shared in the glory. In the present case, much irreparable mischief had already been done—it was the *duty of the nation* to allow it to proceed no further.' According to Mr. Wilberforce, 'It was the main object of the Meeting, that every *individual*, in his separate walk of life, should endeavour to *disseminate knowledge* on this important subject, and to awake the feelings which knowledge on such subjects *must produce*. He felt himself deeply criminal in having been remiss in spreading that intelligence.' 'All should endeavour to excite *universal disgust* against the horrid traffick; following the example of his friend, Mr. Brougham, who, by the law which he had introduced, had stamped a character of *infamy* on the traffick, and caused the traders to be considered, not only as the perpetrators of an act forbidden by the law, but as men whose occupation was equally disgraceful with that of *housebreakers* or *pick-pockets*.' Such were the exertions, such was the spirit-stirring language of these patriots of *Africa*, a land they never saw, and on behalf of a people with whom they had not a single link of relationship, save only that of being men.—The whole solution of their sympathy you have in Mr. Wedgewood's medallion of an imploring *Negro* in chains, inscribed 'Am I not a man and a brother?'—But to Parliamentary Patriots of *England*, is not an *Englishman* somewhat more than an *African Negro*?—Let such patriots then imagine the medallion of an indignant Englishman, not in the crouching attitude of a kneeling suppliant, but erect, and thus apostrophizing: 'Are we not joint heirs of the same inheritance, and is not that inheritance in the hand of robbers?'—Strange it does seem, but fact and experience prove it true, that, place in the Commons House a man most independent in principle and in fortune, one who enters that House under a declared conviction of its needing a radical reform, and who ever afterwards holds that language, yet having once had an intoxi-



eating taste of its despotism, it is next to a miracle if he retain a genuine relish for popular liberty. To this cause must be referred the evident reluctance with which too often the very advocates of Reform among the Members of that House ever meet the people when a constitutional Reform in their Representation is the object of assembling. On other questions, they not only join the people, but they prompt them. Against a tax, or against a Minister, they can exert the utmost activity. On the *Negro Slave Trade* nothing short of complete abolition will content them. But a complete abolition of the *English Slave Trade* seems so little to their taste, that *touching that object*, they prefer confining all their exertions within those guilty walls, where they *of a certainty know* that, unbacked by the national voice, they must fail.

"One instance of this prejudice I can never forget, and it is full of instruction: a Member, as independent of soul as by wealth, as eminent for a vigorous mind as for manly eloquence, accustomed to shine in popular assemblies, and an undoubted friend of liberty, having been invited to take part in a Meeting for Parliamentary Reform, readily, indeed, promised his utmost services *in the House*, but declined to act *out of the House*, as '*likely to do more harm than good*.' Thus can political prejudice, like fanatical superstition, reconcile strong minds to absurdities! Now, mark! when, this time two years ago, to overpower the Minister and his venal majority in the cause of the *African Negroes*, this Gentleman did not think that acting *out of the House* was '*likely to do more harm than good*,' for on that occasion, and in this Hall, he met the People, and took the lead in exhorting them to the most animated and unanimous exertions. To the same end, in his words, for better I cannot find, I will now address you.—That manly person 'hoped all present would adopt the *Petition* which he had the honour to propose to them, and give it their *signatures*. He wished all of them to use their *influence* in the *diffusion* of the sentiments of that *Petition*, till they became NATIONAL beyond all that was recorded in history.' This Gentleman farther said, that 'to adopt the *Petition* was the ONLY MEANS by which they could hope to see accomplished the work in which they were engaged: but without a *general expression of the sentiments of the PEOPLE* their wishes would be ineffectual.' 'The Members of the Legislature had been more than once *compelled to listen* to the voice of the PEOPLE; and it was well known that a late measure had been abandoned in consequence of the universal feeling of the PUBLIC against it.' 'They had but to SPEAK and to ACT, and they needed not to despair, that *their wishes* would be *accomplished*, and their *national character* redeemed.'

"I cannot more properly than at this point in my argument, advert to the small remaining difference of opinion which still, after forty-six years of discussion, is to be found among professed advocates for Reform. Touching the extent of representation, and the equality of its distribution, there is no disagreement worth mentioning. Taught by dear-bought experience, the public mind now recognizes the ancient sound doctrine of our Constitution, that representation and direct taxation are inseparable; and that such a common right should be equally distributed is too self-evident to be denied, and too just to be resisted by any one who has the least regard for character, or the reputation of sense. But as, in respect of the unconstitutional duration of Parliaments, a link of reasoning is necessary to a demonstration, so all possible advantage is taken of this circumstance by cavillers. These are found among such as have a hankering

after unconstitutional power, such as are incurred by the innumerable evils which have flowed from a mistaken expediency, and such as never reason, but direct all their steps by the watch-words of party, who, as a last feeble struggle against radical Reform, as the last hopeless effort of sinking error, now catch at the straw of a triennial duration. When last year in Scotland, a shrewd native observed to me, that *he would take truth and time against any other two!* On the topic of a constitutional duration of Parliament, I will take truth and time against any two hundred, be those two hundred whom they may, that shall attempt to vindicate triennial Parliaments, or Parliaments of any duration exceeding one year. This I hold it right distinctly to say for myself. According to what was agreed on in the previous meeting, the concluding words of what I have to submit to you, are generally specific. It is there proposed 'that Parliaments may only have continuance, according to the principles of the Constitution;' but as I have had occasion more than once to controvert the doctrine of writers, who have expressly argued, that *triennial Parliaments are constitutional*, so, to guard against so great an error, and the mischief I conceive it to carry in its womb, I am decidedly of opinion, that we ought to add these explanatory words, namely, not exceeding one year; but this I leave to the consideration of the Meeting, and shall not make a motion for this addition, unless it shall appear to be your wish.

"But, having expressly reserved to myself the right of stating to this Meeting my individual opinion on this important point, and of supporting that opinion, I will endeavour so to do in as few words as possible; first only premising that, on every other part, there was in that previous Meeting a perfect unanimity.

"The English constitution being confessedly of Saxon origin, it is a fact of some weight, that, for above 1200 years from the establishment of the first Saxon sovereignty in this island, Parliaments of a duration exceeding one year were utterly unknown to the law.

"This, for its antiquity, and in the way of precedent, has great force. But our country's freedom ought to have more solid foundations; these it finds in truth, in justice, and in the eternal law of nature.

"According to these, our sages have shown, that the people's best property and *inheritance* is their political liberty; because *that*, in fact, is their sole *security* for every other *inheritance*; for a people whose laws are made, not by themselves through their representatives, but whom *others have set over them*, and who, at their own arbitrary discretion, impose on them what taxes they please, cannot possibly have any *security* for property, or even for life.

"This being premised, it follows, that as every Englishman, at the legal expiration of his minority, has a complete right to enter into the unrestrained possession of whatever is his *property and inheritance*, so his political liberty, which is the most valuable part thereof, he must, in an especial manner, *so inherit*, or he receives a most serious injury. It is, therefore, evident, that it is only when the duration of Parliaments exceeds not one year, there is a possibility of a just and rightful succession in the *inheritance* of the most valuable of all property. We are to recollect that between inheriting lands and inheriting liberty, there is this distinction—in respect of lands, we inherit as *individuals*; whereas, in respect of our property in Legislative suffrage, we inherit as members of an elective *community*. In the *nature of things* there is nothing to bar an individual from inheriting his

lands on *the first day of manhood*; but it is not possible that the member of an elective community should enjoy his right of suffrage until a Parliament is to be chosen; and if every individual of the rising generation can do this in *the first year of manhood*, the political liberty of each man, and of the whole nation, is as entire as *the nature of things* will admit of. Here, then, it is demonstrated that no Parliament can be constitutional or consistent with justice and the inheritance of property, or compatible with liberty, if its duration exceed one year.

"As the Constitutional barrier or bank by which our liberty and property are defended from the surrounding flood of despotism, is wholly composed of the principles of justice and free government, so now, Gentlemen, mark the fatal consequence of a breach being once made in that barrier or bank, small as that breach may be. The first breach made in the barrier of annual election some may consider as small; because it only gave to Parliament a continuance of three years; but please to note that this extension deprived the whole nation of freedom for two parts in three of human life. But the analogy between political and physical banks we shall find here remarkably strong; for that breach once made, such a torrent of corruption incessantly flowed in, that this small breach was soon worn to a great one, and in two-and-twenty years ended in Parliaments of a seven years duration; which to the nation is a denial of freedom for six parts in seven of human life. In four different instances in Scotland, there has been an improvement on this tyranny; for, by certain counties electing *alternatively*, they have the choice of Members only once in fourteen years; that is, the few monopolists of suffrage; for, as to the people, they have no share at all, as every Scotch county is exactly on a footing with an English rotten borough, where all is farce, mockery, and insult—any thing but *representation*. You see, then, to what an extravagance of despotism an apparently small breach in the barrier of liberty leads, and this brings me back to its being a right both of individual and national *inheritance*, that no Parliament have a continuance exceeding one year. Now, as the Commons having complete representation in Parliament is the very life blood of national liberty, the Commons House is evidently the most vital organ of the Constitution, the main stay and best part of the State, the most important part of our Government. In what light, then, are we to view an act of any man, or any body of men, which leads directly to the overthrow of our lawful Government, which strikes at the very existence of our free state, and which stabs the Constitution in its vitals? We must all feel that such an act is the greatest, the rankest of all treasons: and this treason, I maintain, was committed by those who passed that fatal Act which gave us a corrupt Triennial Parliament: which, in its turn, gave us a Septennial Parliament; and which two hot-beds of all mischief gave us a debt of a thousand millions, the curse of an intolerable taxation without representation, and a monstrous standing army; which Hume, half a century ago, pronounced a disease whereof our Constitution must inevitably perish—as perish it will, unless Parliament be radically reformed. I confess, therefore, it is no small trial of my patience, when I hear Gentlemen arguing in favour of Triennial Parliaments. If, however, my reasoning be correct, this distinction will arise, that if a Triennial Parliament should be imposed on us by a force we could not resist, we should have nothing for it but submission, until we could again throw off the tyranny; whereas, to join in any exertions, in any measure, or in

any vote for a Triennial Parliament, would be an act of treason. Having thus delivered you my sentiments on Representation, I have the pleasure to inform you, we have, within these three days, had a reinforcement of Petitions from Scotland, to the number of 40, all speaking the true language of the Constitution. I have also the satisfaction to observe, that attempts for misleading the public mind, in the hope of stopping the work of Reform at the half-way house of a Triennial Parliament, have, for the last seven years, been few and feeble, chiefly peeping out under the cover of newspaper paragraphs and other anonymous masks, with no arguments but such as have been a thousand times refuted, and no reasoning above that of a child. Touching the portentous Standing Army, I shall make no observations, but leave that topic as it stands in the Declaration I shall have the honour to propose.

"I have now to move, that in the present most awful crisis of our country it is judged expedient to make the following Declaration:—

Resolved—That in the present most awful crisis of our country, it is judged expedient to make the following

#### DECLARATION.

Parliaments having an unconstitutional duration, and the right of suffrage being, by a variety of unjust exclusions, so extensively undermined and taken away, that the People, instead of having only such laws to observe, and such taxes to pay, as, agreeably to the English Constitution, had been imposed *with their own consent*, find themselves brought under the arbitrary legislation and oppressive taxation of an OLIGARCHY: an OLIGARCHY, whose sweeping usurpation of Seats in the Commons' House, besides excluding the People from their proper and rightful share in the government, brings the Crown into a disgraceful dependence on a selfish faction, in place of a dignified reliance on the generous Commons of the Realm.

That OLIGARCHY, thereby, hath stolen into a participation in the Executive Power; of which participation, by means of wars and patronage, it well knows how to profit.

That OLIGARCHY, by so stabbing the Constitution in its most vital organ, and so invading the regal office, doubly betrays the State. It violates at once the rights of King and People; and, in fact, wholly subverts the lawful Government of our Country.

The People having been despoiled of their freedom, and therefore having had no defence of their property against an unconstitutional power, their present melancholy condition is but the natural consequence of their subjugation to oligarchical despotism: a despotism the more pillaging and destructive, as it wears the mask of freedom.

Under the smooth appellation of influence, it works by an unbounded corruption; and this corruption audaciously rears its front even in that very House wherein no influence *whatever*, other than that of free and jealous Constituents, ought to be found or imagined.

In the sound language of our law, the Members of that House are the People's *Attorneys*. In that capacity alone they hold their seats; and their office is, to do in Parliament that which the People, if there in person, would do for themselves.

So complete, indeed, in law, is the identity between the Constituent Body and its Representative, that the style and title of the latter is, "The Commons in Parliament assembled."

They, therefore, among these Attorneys of the people who accept of emoluments from the Crown, of course, incur suspicion: but, when uniform experience proves them thus influenced to betray



their trust, common though the crime, pre-eminent is the wickedness.

Wise and honest, therefore, was the enactment, in the year 1700, "That no person who has an office or place of profit under the King, or receives a pension from the Crown, shall be capable of serving as a Member of the House of Commons."

But seeing how these matters are managed, and knowing how amply the OLIGARCHY furnishes Secret Service Money, we are at no loss to account for the voting we daily witness.

A House of Commons once degenerated from the dignity of the People's Representatives; once fallen from this high estate; shorn of its lustre, and, by a resistless faction, divested of its Godlike attribute of being the Nation's protector, must become in the hands of that faction an instrument to do the faction's will, a mere engine of its despotism.

Hence abuses in all departments, grievances without redress as without number, and evils unspeakable! To the most conspicuous only we shall at present advert.

Certain that, for more than 12 centuries, England knew nothing of a National Debt, it is to non-representation and long Parliaments, or, in other words, to an unsound House of Commons, she owes a knowledge of that curse.

In little more than one century, such a House of Commons has incurred a debt exceeding a thousand millions sterling, and imposes forty-four millions a year, in Taxes to defray the interest; exclusive of twenty-seven millions for the expenses of the Government itself.

Thus, on the whole, seventy-one millions a year pass from the pockets of the people into the Exchequer of the OLIGARCHS; for their's, and not the King's, is that Exchequer, to be filled and emptied just as the faction pleases.

And when, in a revenue of seventy-one millions a year, thus extorted, the OLIGARCHS who vote it find indeed their prosperity, with an effrontery of which none else are capable, they cry aloud, "Behold the prosperity of a nation whose annual expenditure is seventy-one millions!" while it is that very expenditure which keeps the nation poor and wretched; for such must be the condition of a nation, whose debt no one deems it possible to pay—one sixth, if not one fifth, of whose industrious population are parish paupers, and of whose husbandmen and traders a vast proportion are bankrupts.

What is still in the womb of time, can be at the best but matter of conjecture. With a Standing Army, however, we are already but too well acquainted; and all history, without exception, bears testimony to this fact, *that no people on earth who once adopted the use of a Standing Army, ever preserved their liberties.*

If, therefore, England mean to be the first exception, it can only be by the force of an extraordinary wisdom and virtue, and can only be by a sacred adherence to her own admirable Constitution, which is, in fact, a two-fold system of civil and military polity—a polity which, while for civil objects it embraces that "happiest discovery of political wisdom," *legislative representation*, for military purposes places the sword of defence in the hands of Freemen. Great Britain alone can furnish fifteen hundred thousand of such defenders.

Provided England respect her own two-fold Constitution, she may therein discover a solution of that most difficult of all political problems, how to reconcile the existence of a STANDING ARMY with the existence of LIBERTY.

Let her then listen to the patriot voice of her illustrious Jones, hailed by a sage\* as "the most

enlightened of the sons of men." Jones, who, faithfully unfolding her long-hidden treasures of constitutional law, anxiously exhorts his country to "restore to full vigour and energy her proper Militia, the county power.†

Touching what in England, respecting a soldiery, is constitutional or unconstitutional, it ought to be kept in perpetual remembrance, that "the Laws and Constitution of these Kingdoms know no such state as that of perpetual STANDING SOLDIERS,"‡ and that "our Judges never read of them in all their law books:§ for that Constitution, having regard only to the community's freedom, tranquillity, happiness, and defence, had no need of a STANDING ARMY; a species of force applicable only to interference with other countries, to foreign war, or to aggrandizement by conquest; for, says Bacon, "a mercenary army is fittest to invade a country, but a militia to defend it."

Hence it follows, that a STANDING ARMY in time of peace, hath in the protection of the State's Dependencies its legitimate object, so that that protection must determine its proper strength. Seeing that STANDING SOLDIERS are utterly unknown to the law, it is most evident that, for carrying that law into execution, *they never can be the right instruments.*

And it is universally true, that, whatever be forms or appearances, that State hath lost its liberties, where, for enforcing the law, the last resort is to the sword of a STANDING ARMY; as, on the contrary, that State alone is free, where the law, in extreme cases, can be effectually carried into execution by free instruments, that is, by a force of free men.

Such a force is the county power of our country. "Restored to full vigour and energy," having the attribute of resistless power, a successful insurrection must be impossible; and, possessing also ubiquity, a mischievous riot would be a miracle.

When, on the expulsion of a misguided Prince, the Bill of Rights declared a "STANDING ARMY in time of peace to be against law, unless with consent of Parliament," it, of course, meant to use the words of the Prince then just seated on the Throne, "a lawful Parliament," that is, a Parliament of a constitutional duration, in which the people should be truly represented.

When the Bill of Rights made this declaration, Parliaments of a duration not exceeding one year, were the only Parliaments which had ever been known to the LAW.

Keeping in mind that the county power, which is a moiety of the Constitution of England, is now nowhere to be found but in our law books, and has been purposely neglected to furnish pretexts for the planting and rearing up of a STANDING ARMY, a system, against which, from its commencement to the present day, all true Patriots have loudly remonstrated—a system which even the late Earl of Liverpool, before silenced by a place, ably exposed and severely reprobated as a "detestable policy:¶" and having at length witnessed the voting in time of peace an army of 176,615 men, including the provision for India, every Englishman will do well, seriously to ask himself two questions: first, "By WHOM voted?" and, secondly, "For WHAT voted?"

What Statesman hath ever disputed the conclusion of the sagacious Hume, when he pronounced "our STANDING ARMY a mortal distemper in the Constitution, of which it must inevitably pe-

† Legal means of suppressing Riots, 28, 32.

‡ Black. Com. I. 408.

§ Sir Robert Atkins, in defending Lord Russell.

¶ Dis. on Est. Con. Force, 8. 65. and 1st Ed. pub. not by his leave, after he was Lord Hawkesbury.

\* Johnson.

"risk?"—*Essays*, II. 376. Of that distemper perish it must, unless PARLIAMENT BE REFORMED; and, in preference to busying itself with balancing the Powers of Europe, it balance the powers of our Constitution; that so "restored to full vigour and energy," it no longer fear to perish by a force which is *foreign to its nature and principles*, and of which *external service* is the sole legitimate object.

Thus, and thus alone, can the prophecy of Hume be falsified.—Thus, and thus alone, can the mad career of tyrannic folly be stayed, and our country preserved from groaning in poverty, wretchedness, and degradation, under a Government supported by corruption and the sword!

Those grievances alone which we have specified have tongues that proclaim too loudly to be unheard, too distinctly to be misunderstood, that THE TIME IS COME for all who desire the deliverance of their country, to manifest in virtuous action that desire.

Being certain from the high deeds in arms achieved by the present race of Englishmen, that Runnymede beheld not a braver race; and equally certain, that in letters this age stoops not to that of the Revolution, neither courage nor ability is wanting for aught that is worthy of our energies.

But, public virtue, it is said, we also require. What is public virtue? It is rightly to act for the *interest and security* of the nation. What is the nation? It is the aggregate of the individuals of whom it is composed. Now each individual desires freedom, that so the hand of arbitrary power enter not his pocket against his will, and take his money without his consent.

As taxes, then, are voted by a House of Commons, so the individual cannot have this security unless it be had by the *community*, who appoint that House; but if this security, the effect of liberty, be enjoyed by the community, so must it be enjoyed by each individual.

Does it, then, so much require public virtue as common sense—a spirit of patriotism, as a desire of self preservation, that we shall unite to stem the devastating torrent of *taxation without representation*, and the never-ceasing oppressions of an OLIGARCHY, whose despotism is as intolerable as the means of it are iniquitous?

In the comparative few in whom this despotism centers, public virtue, indeed, must be necessary ere, from sheer principle, they sacrifice their private advantage to the public weal. Yet, as in that body there are those who obtained the monopoly of power, not by unconstitutional acts of their own, but of their ancestors, and whose private characters are amiable and excellent examples of a generous virtue for saving their sinking country, may now, doubtless, be expected.

As for those who are totally blind, bigoted, incurable, and politically infatuated, they are every way too odious and contemptible to be regarded, and utterly incapable of resisting, the voice of a united people.

We, therefore, exhort all Englishmen who desire the deliverance of their country, to raise their Constitutional voice by petition, for claiming as a lawful inheritance and undoubted right, that Representation be co-extensive at least with direct Taxation; that such Representation be equally distributed throughout the community; and that Parliaments may only have a continuance according to the principles of the Constitution.

Sir F. BURDETT, in rising to put the question upon the Declaration proposed by Major Cartwright, spoke in substance as follows: "Gentlemen, after hearing all that has been said—after considering the various observations that have been ad-

ressed to you—it remains for you to decide upon the Declaration which it is my duty, as Chairman, to submit to your judgment. It is scarcely necessary for me to state, that I concur entirely in the principle and purpose of this Declaration, as well as in the general spirit of the able and impressive speeches which you have heard from the venerable Mover and his Second. I am aware that it is rather unusual for the Chairman of an Assembly of this nature to take a part in the debate; but from the interest which I feel upon this great question, I cannot abstain from making some observations; for it has been the principal object of my life, as it is the first wish of my heart, to rouse public attention, to excite universal exertion for the attainment of Parliamentary Reform. (*Hear, hear, hear!*) That this exertion ought to be made, and that if made it would ensure success, are propositions equally indisputable. It is the interest of every class of the people of England to make such exertion for such an object—but of all classes it is more particularly the interest of the Gentlemen of landed property. This, indeed, has always been my firm impression; and from the circumstances and prospects of the country, I apprehend that that impression is likely very soon to prevail among all men who regard independence and possess common sense. I regret however, to observe, that those gentlemen, whom I know to concur with me in sentiment, have not thought proper to attend here to-day. For, if these gentlemen had countenanced the meeting by their presence, and aided it by their counsel, they could not fail to produce a good effect. It is, indeed, always of advantage, that those who entertain the same sentiment, and seek the same object, should communicate and concert measures together; but it would be peculiarly desirable that the gentlemen and the people should come in contact upon an occasion of this nature. I do not agree with the Hon. Gentleman who seconded the motion, that any degree of apathy or indifference exists among the people upon this important question. For I have never met any large collection of the people, without witnessing the most sincere and ardent sympathy with every sentiment interesting to liberty, or connected with the old Constitution of the country, without finding their wishes completely responsive to my own feelings; never, indeed, have I known the people silent or inert where they ought to speak or act. (*Hear, hear!*) But I am sorry to say, that very different has been my experience in the company of what are generally called the superior order; for among them I have found an extraordinary apathy and unaccountable unwillingness to meet and co-operate with the people, although that order are, as I feel, much more interested than any other in the restoration of our public rights. It is often said, that those who have a large stake in the country, are most likely to feel an interest in its privileges, its freedom, and its prosperity; and this appeared a very reasonable proposition. But yet how contradictory was experience to all theory—to all theory upon this subject. For, whether we looked at home or abroad, we found what were denominated the higher orders evincing the least solicitude for the fate of their country—standing aloof from the people, and acting as if their feelings were in an inverse ratio to their obvious interest. If we looked to Spain, for instance, of whom were those Spanish Patriots composed who struggled for the emancipation of their country from foreign dominion? We there found the country deserted by almost all the great landed proprietors—by all those with higher sounding titles than we had yet had in England, although from recent establishments we bid fair soon to be on a par with



them. (*A laugh and hear!*) We there found that the struggle was left almost entirely to the people. But although such merit belonged to them, what was their reward? What has been the result? Why, that the Spanish Patriots, as well as the British people, have been most grievously disappointed—that instead of allowing the Spaniards to enjoy the liberty for which they had so gallantly fought, that tyranny was re-established, with additional rancour, of which they and all mankind had so long had reason to complain—that the chains which the valour of the people had broken, were repaired and riveted. (*Hear, hear, hear!*) But such has been the result in every nation in which the British Government has interposed. Instead of that deliverance and liberty which has been so often talked of, which was the professed object of the war, we have witnessed the universal restoration of a system of tyranny—and how are the people of England to feel, whose blood has been spilt, whose treasure has been expended, I could almost say exhausted, to produce such melancholy consequences, and who are still condemned to submit to an intolerable burthen of debt and taxation for the purpose of afflicting mankind? What has been the effect of sanguinary war, of extravagant expenditure, and of British counsels in every part of Europe? Has the condition of the people been improved in any quarter, or, rather, has not their misery been aggravated. Not only in Spain, but in Italy and in Germany the most galling despotism has been established. For the people of those countries, in getting rid of the tyranny of Bonaparte, of which the world has heard so much, have been subjected to a degree of tyranny compared to which that of Bonaparte had not the weight of a feather. (*Hear, hear!*) For what comparison could Bonaparte's tyranny bear to a system of the most atrocious despotism and cruelty, conceived in ages of darkness and superstition, and embittered by the refinements of modern ingenuity? What, again I ask, must be the feeling of the people of England upon such results, encumbered as they are with an enormous debt? Are not such results calculated to open the eyes of every man in England, particularly, considering how very contrary they are to all the promises that were held out in the course of the war, and how contrary they are also to our own best interests? But the whole of the evil may be attributed to a Borough government; for ours is not a Government of Monarchy or Aristocracy, or of arbitrary power vesting in the Crown—No; the whole proceeds from that worst depository of arbitrary power, a corrupt, vile, trafficking Borough faction. (*Hear, hear!*) With that detestable oligarchy all our misfortunes and those of Europe originated. This, therefore, was the great and dangerous power which the people of this country were imperiously called upon to resist. No Court Lawyer had yet pronounced it high treason to oppose these Boroughmongers. But possibly, such may be the doctrine bye and bye and if so, I think that from the inveterate character of my hostility to this faction, I am very likely to be executed for high treason. The mischief of this oligarchic faction has gone to such an excess that its baneful influence must be destroyed, or it will be carried to such a pitch, that, probably, like sin and death, it will destroy itself. (*Hear, hear, hear!*) As to the proposition of my Noble Colleague for abstaining from the use of luxuries subject to taxation, that abstinence is, in fact, no longer a matter of choice with the people, and therefore, to adopt that proposition, would be only to add insult to injury. For how few can now afford to use any luxuries but those who are enabled to pay for them out of the public purse. (*Hear, hear!*)

Hardly any man who does not participate of the receipts of taxation has been able for some time to furnish himself with luxuries. All, or almost all men, unconnected with the Treasury, have been gradually compelled to do without them, in consequence of the pressure of the taxes. We have, in fact, been like men on board a leaking vessel, pumping for life, every man struggling to keep his head above water. (*Hear, hear!*) No man finds himself in the situation in which he stood at the commencement of the late long and infamous war, undertaken, as is now evident to the world, for the purpose of restoring a family to the throne of France, whom the French people hated and despised. (*Hear, hear!*) I repeat, that for the attainment of this most abominable and chief object of the war, that of forcing the people of France to submit to the dominion of a family notorious throughout its whole history for cruelty and superstition, such distressing consequences have been entailed upon this country as the people are unable to bear, in the immense pressure of taxes—in the extreme derangement of every species of industry, agricultural and mechanical—in the general stagnation of trade and manufactures, and the consequent want of employment, and of food, by the great mass of our people. (*Hear, hear!*) If the people themselves were at all responsible for such consequences; if they had had any concern in the cause to which they are attributable, I should not hesitate to say, that they deserved no pity, because they would be only drinking of the poisoned chalice of which they had forced other nations to take the very dregs.—But the fact is, that the people have had nothing to do with the Government whose gross want of policy, and principle, and feeling, has produced such deplorable effects. And this is the natural consequence of a people having no influence in the conduct of their Government. But what I wish and trust will be the result of the adoption of the measure which this Meeting has in view is, that the people should have something to do with the Government—that they shall have some share of control over its operations—that, contrary to the doctrine so insultingly laid down by the priestly insolence of Bishop Horsely, “that the people had nothing to do with the laws but to obey them;” the people should obey no laws and pay no taxes but such as had received their consent and approbation, by voting for the election of those Representatives by whom such laws should be enacted, or such taxes imposed. These are the plain principles of the Reform which we seek to establish; and wherever these principles are not established, tyranny and injustice must prevail. To compel a man to pay taxes, in the imposition of which he has no vote, is, according to the old maxims of our Constitution, and the true principle of universal justice, nothing in fact less than absolute robbery. This, indeed, is a proposition which it requires no eloquence to maintain. For what is property but that which no one can take from us without our own consent—that of which we can be deprived at the will of another, even when we have no influence or control, cannot be deemed property; and yet such is the state of property in this country, in consequence of the wretched state of popular representation in that which is improperly called the House of Commons. To correct that evil is the end of Reform. We do not desire to interfere with the interests or the prerogatives of either the Crown or the Lords—we do not seek to reduce the established privileges of either, although were the country to begin anew, there might be different opinions as to the extent of those privileges, and some might think that both these branches of the Constitution had too many privileges.—

But all we ask and wish is, that the people may be restored to their due rank in the Constitution—that they may recover their station by being put in possession of the few but valuable privileges which, according to the original arrangement of that Constitution, had fallen to their lot. But to revert to the recommendation of my Noble Colleague, that the people should dispense with articles subject to taxation; were that mode of resistance possible, I must say that I should not be at all surprised, from what we have all witnessed, if through the Borough Faction (for I cannot call it the House of Commons) a law were enacted, imposing some heavy penalty upon any such attempt. We have witnessed enough of the promptitude of this faction to sanction penal laws, to remove all doubt as to their disposition to devise punishment for any measure, likely to reduce their revenue. We have seen Lord Ellenborough propose 12 or 14 additions to that penal code, which was already proverbially horrible among all good and wise men; and that the proposition or propositions were promptly adopted by the borough faction. Therefore, we can scarcely suppose that there would be the least hesitation to inflict punishment upon any attempt, even by abstinence, to reduce the receipts of the treasury, which attempt would probably be denounced as a proof of some stubborn spirit, or as an insulting instance of the ignorant impatience of the people for relief from taxation. (Hear, hear!) The Hon. Baronet then made some remarks in reply to the observations of Mr. Jones, and the use of the word *Petition*, which he said was a mere technical expression. It is a mistake to suppose that it implies a mere begging of alms—for it means a demand of right, as the *Petition of Rights*, for instance. Therefore, it would be a false idea of dignity to decline the use of the word *petition*. For myself I declare, that if I witnessed a general disposition on the part of the people to *Petition for Reform*, I should entertain the highest hopes of success. For, independently of the consideration that the voice of the oppressed was always terrible to the oppressors, something must, I have no doubt, be done in compliance with the general wish of the people of England, if that wish were firmly and energetically expressed; therefore, I am an advocate for petitioning. It had been remarked there was an essential power in the people which might be employed in resistance to encroachments on their rights, and that it ought and would be employed in some way or other in their own protection: there was indeed an essential power still in the people, and it was highly important to consider in what manner that power could and should be exercised for the public advantage and safety. It was certainly not the best way to attain this object to lead men wantonly and uselessly to expose their naked bosoms to balls and bayonets, though such mischiefs might be expected to follow, if wiser and more constitutional modes were not adopted. There was indeed an essential power in the people, but there was also an essential power for their barracks at Hyde Park, at Knightsbridge, at the Tower, at Dulwich, at Hounslow, at Deptford, and at Chatham. We are, in fact, in this metropolis, in the midst of a circumvallation of fortresses. But I protest against every idea of desperation and bloodshed. Be it our study, as it is our duty and policy, to pursue a course of constitutional remonstrance and representation—to make our case perfectly known, and if the landed Gentlemen will stand forward to

act with the people, the best effects may be looked for from such a course. If, however, those Gentlemen will stand aloof, notwithstanding the pressure of our difficulties—if they will not condescend to meet and co-operate with their countrymen, the system may go too far to be remedied, confusion and disorder must ensue, and the result must be either the establishment of a complete military despotism, if that do not already exist, or scenes of struggling and national mischief, which the minds of good men must shudder to anticipate. That the people may be driven to desperation is, unfortunately, but too much to be apprehended; but to avert such a dreadful alternative, is the object of the Declaration which I hold in my hand. This Declaration emanates from a Society of Gentlemen bearing the sacred name of Hampden, who is justly venerated by his countrymen; who bled because he would not be taxed without his own consent. [*Hear, hear, hear!*] It will be seen that this Declaration does not contain any statement with regard to the right of voting. That, indeed, is a question, which, at present, it would be premature to discuss; but it will be observed, that the Declaration is justly express on one undeniable point, namely, that the right of voting should at least be co-extensive with direct taxation. I cordially agree with the recommendation that clubs, or societies connected with the Hampden Club, should be established throughout England. Such an establishment is, indeed, extremely desirable; and that the several clubs should communicate as to the state of opinion in their respective districts, concert measures together, and throw out suggestions to each other for the benefit of the common object. [*Hear, hear!*] I hope, therefore, the country Gentlemen present will use their endeavours to institute such clubs in their several neighbourhoods. I am happy, indeed, to learn from my friend near me, (Major Cartwright,) that several such clubs already exist in Scotland; that one is also formed in the respectable town of Belfast, in Ireland; and that similar clubs are forming at York and Newcastle. I am also happy to learn that no less than forty-three *Petitions* are ready to be presented in favour of Reform to the assembly of the Borough faction; I cannot expect that such *Petitions* will make any impression upon the minds of that body; for to use the language of Antonio, alluding to Shylock—

“I pray you think you question with the Jew.  
You may as well go stand upon the beach,  
And bid the main flood bate its usual height—  
You may as well use question with the wolf  
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb—  
You may as well forbid the mountain pines  
To wag their high tops, and to make no noise  
When they are fretted with the gusts of Heav’n—  
You may as well do any thing most hard,  
As seek to soften that, than which what’s harder?”

the hearts of corrupt men. [*Hear, hear, hear!*]

But I do hope that these petitions, although they may not immediately affect the decisions of the Borough faction, will serve to raise such a voice in the country as shall operate to appal their hearts, and contribute to the establishment of Parliamentary Reform. (*Loud and long continued cheers.*)

The Hon. Baronet concluded with putting the declaration to the vote, and it was adopted with acclamations of unanimity.

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